



Monday March 9, 2009
14:00 to 16:00

Lyon Convention Center
France

THE UNRESOLVED ISSUE OF MALARIA

Moderator

- **Declan Butler**, journalist, Nature

Speakers

- **Jean-Claude Berthélemy**, Professor, University Paris I, France
- **Hiroshi Chimura**, Director, Research and Development Division, Health Policy Bureau, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labour, Japan
- **Djiba Kané Diallo**, Coordinator, Voices of Mali Programme, Mali
- **Ogobara Doumbo**, Director, Malaria Research and Training Center, Mali
- **James A. Geraghty**, Senior Vice President, Genzyme Corporation, USA
- **Pascal Housset**, Chief Executive Officer, Bayer Environmental Science, France
- **Robert Sebbag**, Vice President Access to Medicines, Sanofi Aventis, France
- **Thomas Teuscher**, Senior Advisor Policy, Strategy and Governance Roll Back Malaria Partnership

Summary

- The aim of this session was to provide information on the current progress on the disease and the following required steps that need to be taken.
- Malaria is an ongoing plague, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where it represents the equivalent of 3 tsunamis each year. More than 1 million people, mostly children under five die every year due to the disease, making it a real war waged against the parasite.
- The actual progress is hard to measure as one of the main challenges is to have recent data.
- The talk started with the underlining of the importance of the scaling up to universal coverage of a combined approach of prevention, and drug treatment. This could reduce or eradicate malaria in many countries with low transmission rates. Eradicating from higher transmission countries will require new tools.
- Nevertheless, research must be increased to provide new tools, and to replace existing ones as these succumb to parasite and mosquito resistance.
- We should never forget that malaria is not only a parasite issue but has also geographic and sociological factors.
- These last years have seen a major change in malaria, as prevention tools such as mosquito nets and artemisinin drugs have been sent in great numbers to developing countries, amongst which Mali.



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- In addition, field operatives have seen a change in patient mentality, going from a push to a pull culture from the people.
- NGOs in such countries say they can feel a change in mentality, though changing is not the priority, acting, through universal health and prevention coverage, is.
- Throughout the session, one of the main topics to arise was the difficulty for patients in African countries to get access to the drugs.
- On average, tools exist to help fight the parasite but need to be scaled up if they are to be efficient.
- To limit this issue, NGOs from Mali have argued in favor of medical student recruitment who would help with the distribution of drugs in isolated places. That's because Mali only has 1000 doctors; it would need 14000 to distribute universal coverage. However, progress is being made, particularly through billions in new funding by the Global Fund to fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria. There are also some free drug programs set up by pharmaceutical companies and the World Bank for pregnant women and children between 0 and 5 years.
- One of the main requirements, if eradicating malaria is to be done successfully, is understanding the malaria environment, education populations (for instance changing their fatalistic approach to malaria) and improving healthcare systems, especially regarding data.
- The importance of networking between industries, institutions and local policy makers (such as traditional healers) has been shared by the entire panel as well as the need to tell heads of state to stand up to their obligations.
- Pharmaceutical companies have a responsibility to play a role, as they have innovation and DDS capabilities fundamental in fighting malaria.
- Nevertheless, we must not forget that pharmaceutical laboratories also have a responsibility to their stakeholders and cannot give substantial sums of money away.
- The eradication is technically feasible but in a long time, however local elimination of malaria is a much more accessible goal on the short term.
- Whatever solutions are chosen, these need to be ramped up compared to their current state.
- One major specificity of malaria is that it is a disease for which money is no longer scarce, compared to just a decade ago
- This is due to a major awareness of all stakeholders of the need to do something for such plagues.
- One of the major issues, say pharma companies, with diseases such as malaria that affect developing countries is the quality aspect (counterfeiting...).

Quotes

"Treatment will continue to be very important, but prevention is key."

Hiroshi Chimura



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"You cannot prevent the brain drain out of Africa."

Jean-Claude Berthélemy

"Only drug companies can make drugs."

James A. Geraghty

"Nature hates a vacuum, so what will happen if we were to eradicate all anopheleses?"

Pascal Housset

"Thank you AIDS for allowing NGOs and pharmaceutical industries to come together."

Robert Sebbag

*"The time of big pharma is over, so our development will come from emerging countries
as weel."*

Robert Sebbag

"Money is not a problem, we must change mindsets and that takes a long time to do."

Djiba Kané Diallo

"We must multiply investment sources and not just the Bill & Melinda gates foundation."

Thomas Teuscher

"There is no choice, malaria must be fought!"

Ogobara Doumbo



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